

似水流年 Years like Water

Lyricist: Cheng Kwok Kong

Composer: Kitaro

Translated by Wee Kek Koon

似水流年

詞：鄭國江
曲：喜多郎

望著海一片 滿懷倦 無淚也無言
望著天一片 只感到 情懷亂
我的心好似小木船
遠景不見 但仍向著前
誰在命裏主宰我 每天掙扎 人海裏面
心中感嘆 似水流年 不可以留住昨天
留下只有思念 一串串 永遠纏
浩瀚煙波裏 我懷念 懷念往年
外貌早改變 處境都變 情懷未變

Originally written for the 1984 film *Homecoming* about a disillusioned Hong Kong woman returning to her home town in Mainland China and reconnecting with her childhood friends, 'Years like Water' became an instant hit not only in Hong Kong, but also in ethnic Chinese communities all over the world. The poignant song remains a perennial favourite, especially among Hongkongers who fondly and wistfully recall the heady years of the 1980s.

Editor's Note: 'Sishui Liunian' 似水流年 [Years like water], original title 'Carol's theme', is composed by Kitaro, sub-lyricist Cheng Kwok Kong, published by Domo Music Publishing Inc. and Peermusic (S. E. Asia) Ltd.

Years like Water

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My heart's weary, I watch the sea
Tears and words come not to me

My heart's a tangle, I watch the sky
Troubled thoughts they flood my mind

My heart's a raft, a plank adrift
The future unseen, but onwards I heave

Who is it that steers my life
Through humanity, through daily strife?

With plaintive words my heart will sigh
The years like water they flow on by

Yesterday's gone, the past can't hold
While memories stay—tangled, never unfold

Shrouded in mist, my heart will pine
For bygone years that were left behind

My looks have altered, my world has changed
But my heart, my soul they remain the same

Hearing *Years like Water* again

I'm grateful to Anita Mui 梅艷芳 who, with her gifted and inimitable voice, interpreted so beautifully the emotions of a woman whose love had known no regrets. She breathed life into the lyrics of this song.



When I was writing the words to the song, I was learning Chinese ink painting, which informed the milieu described by the song, one marked by quietude and calm. Anita Mui managed to draw the undercurrents out from beneath the unrippled surface, commanding her listeners' emotions with the inflections and pathos of her vocals that spoke of life and one's helplessness in life. The conviction and tenacity she brings to the song mirror her own character, as they do the feelings and character of the film's protagonist.

I don't agree with the adage 'the singer is not the song'. A good song needs a suitable singer before it can touch people's hearts. *Years like Water* is testament to this fact. As for me, I'm just lucky to have written the lyrics.

I'm sure every Hongkonger who works and struggles every moment of his life, upon hearing the lines 'My heart's weary, I watch the sea / Tears and words come not to me / My heart's a tangle, I watch the sky / Troubled thoughts they flood my mind', will silently acquiesce to the words that follow: 'My heart's a raft, a plank adrift / The future unseen, but onwards I heave'.

Cheng Kwok Kong
13 March 2012